

Sub 021

Please add the following new claims

52. A method for treating an intervertebral disc comprising:
2 delivering an introducer into or adjacent to an intervertebral disc;
3 extending a guide wire from a distal end of the introducer such that the guide wire is
4 positioned within the intervertebral disc;
5 attaching a distal portion of the guide wire to an inner wall of the disc ; and
6 advancing a probe along the guide wire such that the probe follows a path of the
7 guide wire within the intervertebral disc.

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53. A method according to claim 52 wherein attaching the guide wire to the inner wall of
the disc comprises inserting a distal portion of the guide wire into the inner wall.

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54. A method according to claim 53 wherein inserting comprises hooking a distal portion
of the guide wire into the inner wall.

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55. A method according to claim 53 wherein the distal portion of the guide wire
comprises an retractable hook, the method further comprising hooking the retractable hook
3 into the inner wall.

1 56. A method according to claim 53 wherein the distal portion of the guide wire
2 comprises multiple hooks, the method further comprising hooking the multiple hooks into
3 the inner wall.

1 57. A method according to claim 52 wherein extending the guide wire is accomplished
2 by applying a longitudinal force to the guide wire which is sufficient to advance the guide
3 wire through the nucleus pulposus and around the inner wall of an annulus fibrosus, but
4 which force is insufficient for guide wire to puncture the annulus fibrosus.

1 58. A method according to claim 52 wherein the probe includes a functional element for
2 performing a function, the method further including performing a function after the probe is
3 advanced.

1 59. A method according to claim 52 wherein the probe includes an electromagnetic
2 energy delivery device, the method further including delivering electromagnetic energy from
3 the electromagnetic energy delivery device after the probe is advanced.

1 60. A method according to claim 59 wherein the electromagnetic energy delivered is
2 selected from group consisting of coherent and incoherent light, radiofrequency, microwave,
3 and ultrasound waves.

1 61. A method according to claim 59 wherein the electromagnetic energy delivery device
2 comprises electrodes adapted to deliver RF energy.

1 62. A method according to claim 61 wherein the RF electrodes have a monopolar
2 configuration.

1 63. A method according to claim 61 wherein the RF electrodes have a bipolar
2 configuration.

1 64. A method according to claim 59 wherein the electromagnetic energy device
2 comprises a resistive heating mechanism.

1 65. A method according to claim 52 wherein extending the guide wire is performed using
2 a handle external to the person which comprises a guide wire control element for controlling
3 the movement of the guide wire within the intervertebral disc.

1 66. A method according to claim 61 wherein the RF electrodes comprise a plurality of
2 alternating one or more active and return electrodes which are positioned on the probe such
3 that there are multiple pairs of an active band and a return band of the active and return
4 electrodes adjacent each other.

1 67. A method according to claim 52 wherein the probe includes a lumen, the method
2 further including delivering or aspirating material in the disc via the lumen.